

Guidance for Visiting People at Home

FOR NON-MEDICAL VISITS DURING THE MINNESOTA “STAY AT HOME” EXECUTIVE ORDER TIME PERIOD

This information is for agencies, community organizations, families, interpreters, and faith communities for whom home visiting has been an essential way to deliver services. During the stay-at-home period, “care of others” is one of the allowed activities if there is no other way to provide that service. Due to the highly contagious nature of COVID-19, and the potential for serious health complications or even death from this virus, use the following guidelines for caring for someone in their home.

Consider whether a home visit is the best option

- If you have any cold or flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, difficulty breathing, sore throat) do not visit anyone’s home.
- If you are over 65 and/or have health conditions like asthma, diabetes, or high blood pressure, you are at higher risk and should find someone else to provide home visiting services.
- Many agencies are no longer allowing in-person visits. Long-term care homes, for example, are no longer allowing visitors to protect residents’ health. If you work with an agency or organization, check to see if there are restrictions or protocols in place during this time.
- Keep in mind that even if you and the person you are visiting do not have any symptoms, you may still be exposing each other to the virus.

Consider alternatives to home visiting

Before visiting someone in person, think of whether there are other ways to help them, or ask others (such as health care workers or colleagues) for ideas.

- Send a personal message or card through the mail.
- Make a phone call, send texts, or email.
- Use FaceTime or other video call options.
- Drop off supplies at the door without direct contact. Keep at least 6 feet of distance at all times if you do interact. If the home visit offers physical or spiritual services, try to think of creative, thoughtful, and effective options to keep physical distance while supporting the person in need.

Guidance for you if you decide to make a home visit

Before you visit: Find out if the person or anyone in the home is experiencing flu-like symptoms. If the answer is “yes,” re-evaluate whether you should continue the visit. If you

choose to visit, follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention practical guidance for caregivers: [If You Are Sick Or Caring For Someone \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html).

- CDC advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to help prevent people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Visit the [Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19 \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html) to learn more about this additional, voluntary public health measure.
- Limit what part of the home you are in. For example, stay in the room closest to the door instead of moving to other rooms if possible.
- Limit the number of people in the space, and keep a distance of at least 6 feet between you and others.
- Keep the visit as short as possible.
- If you are visiting someone who is in bed, stand at the foot of the bed rather than the head. This will give you a natural distancing of about 6 feet while being able to connect directly through eye contact.
- Wash your hands.
 - Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water as soon as you enter the home (or use hand sanitizer if hand washing is not possible).
 - Wash hands frequently during the visit if you perform tasks where you are touching things that other people have touched, and wash hands as soon as you leave.
 - Take hand sanitizer with you in case hand washing is not an option.
- Always cover your coughs and sneezes, and ask others to do the same. Take tissues with you. If you use a tissue, throw it away right after use and then wash or sanitize your hands.
- Avoid touching things in the home and do not touch your eyes, nose, mouth, or face during your home visiting time.
- If you need to share something that the recipient must take by mouth, for medical or religious purposes, pass the solid or liquid item in a container instead of putting it directly into the hand or mouth of the recipient. Be sure to sanitize or dispose of the container after each use.

Learn more

Get the most current and reliable information on COVID-19 from these websites:

- [MDH Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

Minnesota Helpline

For questions related to the COVID-19 pandemic:

651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504

Weekdays: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Minnesota Department of Health
625 Robert St N
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www.health.state.mn.us

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5414.